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Practice Book in English Composition. By ALFRED M. HITCHCOCK, Hartford Public High School. New York: Henry Holt & Co.

From the first page to the last it is evident that Mr. Hitchcock's book is a thoroughly practical one. Its style of treatment is so completely lifelike that one feels one's self listening to the classroom teacher rather than reading a text. All seems to grow out of a teacher's experience, so adaptable and well timed are the suggestions. It is plain that the author expects instruction and drill to be more useful than theory or complete reference. In the preface he declares for a textbook, plain, practical, and sufficiently varied in contents to provide training in both oral and written work, yet not a complete rhetoric nor a complete manual of composition.

In a review of this sort, since courses in English are less definite than many others, it is interesting to note just what goes to make up the contents of a book on composition. The material is here arranged on the two-part plan; the first, suggestions for practice in the different kinds of composition, and the second, a treatment of practice work in correct mechanical forms. The author is happy in his definite purpose to treat in both parts matter which will answer the pupil's questions: "What is the matter with my composition?" "How can I correct it?"

In Part I the order of arrangement would seem to presuppose on the part of the pupil more knowledge of simple exposition than of description. The complete order of narration, exposition, description, and argument can certainly be safely followed, although the parts are sufficiently independent to admit of other arrangement. Letter-writing follows these and receives its proper portion of attention.

From the short illustrations presented—and one is charmed with their clearness—the essential points are unfolded in the brief discussion which follows. These points are applied in the composition exercises suggested.

Part II in its practical applications transfers the emphasis from the usual unit, the paragraph, to the sentence, where common difficulties are extensively treated under unity and coherence. Punctuation is presented as conducive to clearness, if used in moderation. The few common rules of spelling which are most helpful are given with numerous examples of their application. The troublesome verbs receive the usual notice, and the very unique subject of correcting proof is introduced.

Certainly the selection of topics throughout the book and the distribution of emphasis will please the teacher who feels that in recent times there has been much in composition left to be unconsciously imitated from models beyond the grasp of the pupil, and that scarcely enough attention has been given to the mechanical features of correct English.

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Lingua Materna: Chapters on the School Teaching of English. By RICHARD WILSON, B.A. LONDON: Edward Arnold; New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1905. Pp. 208.

This book is written for the use of teachers of "English" in the elementary and the secondary schools of England. The author concerns himself with direct instruction in the mother-tongue, dividing the subject into three sections: (1) grammar and word-study; (2) composition, written and oral, and including paraphrase and *précis*-writing; (3) reading and the study of literature. The elementary character of some

of the author's suggestions will be a surprise to one who has the impression that the teaching of English has long been an advanced and fine art in these schools. The author assumes the contradictory of this. Accordingly, his book abounds with directions which at first seem quite too obvious, and even commonplace to be needful to a teacher who has had the instruction and training to be assumed in the case of every teacher of "English" in American primary or secondary schools. These teachers will hardly need to learn from a book that "great care ought to be exercised in the selection of themes. . . . It is a good plan to allow pupils to select subjects with which they are familiar. . . . And, on the whole, it is an utter mistake to set school pupils to write homilies on the virtues and vices." Nevertheless, the minuteness of these suggestions, and the detailed accounts of methods followed with actual classes, will make the book valuable to many teachers who need line upon line of reproof, correction, and instruction in even the elements of righteousness.

The book contains, however, much else that will interest and help the American teacher of English. The treatment of conventional grammar, including historical grammar, oral composition, and phonetics, is new and sane. The chapter on "Thought-Analysis," including "*précis*-writing" and note-taking, is full of matter new to most American teachers. The author finds it difficult "to discuss with patience that species of literary vandalism which goes by the name of paraphrasing." Yet he holds his patience with extraordinary tenacity through fourteen pages of very excellent suggestions upon that species of literary performance.

There is a particularly good chapter on "Taste in Literature," in which the teacher is warned to see to it that "his methods may not mar the beneficent work which is going on without his help," in the case of boys and girls who have a "natural inherited taste for prose and poetry, who take a delight in reading," and who "come from homes where books are more or less plentiful, where the whole atmosphere fosters the growth of taste." Two other classes will demand attention: those who "under wise and sympathetic treatment can be made to enjoy and profit by the literature lessons, and who are also capable of being filled with a complete dislike for the whole subject if wrong methods are employed;" and "those stolid young barbarians who appear to have absolutely no interest in literary expression. . . . This is really the most interesting of the three classes, at least to the teacher who is not above revising his methods." With reference to the average pupil of these classes, the practical question is: "By what means can the teacher endow his pupils with a taste for literature which is worthy of the name? How can he set to work so that they will, at the end of the school life, turn with impatience from that which is unworthy or that which is merely weak or lacking in inspiration?" Twelve pages are devoted to answering these questions. They are well worth reading and re-reading.

Other chapters there are on "Complete Texts or Selections?" "Some Notes on Method," "Schemes of Work," "Correlation" (of geography and literature, history and literature, nature-study and literature, painting and literature), and "The Equipment of the Teacher of English." The book is interesting from beginning to end. It is, on the whole, a fresh contribution to the literature of its subject. The English teacher cannot afford to leave it out of his set of tools for work.

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